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U.S. Representative

***John Spratt***

South Carolina # 5th District

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**News Release**

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**Shaw Receives \$5.8 Million For New Education Center**

*Rep. Spratt secures funding in military construction bill*

**WASHINGTON — U.S. Rep. John Spratt (D-SC) announced today that Shaw Air Force Base will receive \$5.8 million to construct a new education center. Spratt secured the funding in the fiscal year 2002 appropriations bill for military construction. President Bush signed the bill on Monday, November 5, ensuring funding for the base.**

“This is a project I have been working on for years,” said Spratt, a senior member of the House Armed Services Committee, which authorized the appropriation. “With this facility, Shaw can offer educational opportunities now unavailable because of inadequate space. The base also can save on maintenance and repair, and round out their campus by locating the center near the housing units and dining facility. All in all, it’s a big plus for Shaw Air Force Base.”

The education center would consolidate the base’s classrooms, laboratories, and administrative offices, which currently are spread across seven facilities. Of those seven buildings, three were constructed in 1943 as housing units, one was built in 1953, and three are trailers purchased in 1973. The deteriorating condition and lack of space in the existing buildings have hindered the continued academic, technical, and occupational education of military personnel at Shaw.

“Unfortunately, the present educational facilities at Shaw are better suited for storage than for the continued education of our Air Force personnel,” said Spratt. “But with this funding, the Air Force can emphasize the importance of continued education while demonstrating its commitment with expanded and improved educational facilities at Shaw.”

The proposed education center would include 3,000 square meters of learning space that will house the most up-to-date equipment and allow for increased student/instructor interaction. The center will boast four new computer labs, which will allow deployed personnel to pursue educational opportunities through distance learning by linking the center with local college programs.

Shaw officials say the new center could increase enrollment by 10 percent. Last year alone, the Air Force spent \$1.1 million on tuition assistance and processed almost 5000 enrollments for continuing education classes at Shaw. Of those enrollments, 4339 personnel pursued associates and bachelors degrees, while 503 personnel took graduate courses.

Currently, the University of South Carolina, Central Carolina University, Saint Leo University, Troy State University, and Embry Riddle Aeronautical University administer classes at Shaw. While a few classes from those universities are taught on base, most are held outside the base's gates. The new education center will allow for the consolidation of those classes into one building on the base. In addition, plans for the new education center will alleviate the current parking inadequacies that pose problems for personnel pursuing educational opportunities at Shaw.

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